

Remarks Prior to a Meeting With Prime Minister Pedro Sánchez Pérez-Castejón of Spain

May 12, 2023

President Biden. Well, Mr. President, welcome. I'm glad to return the hospitality you provided for me in Madrid. And my only regret is, I wish you were staying for a week.
[Laughter]

You know, during that visit, I said that—you said that our two nations are linked by a shared desire—I think the quote was—"to promote the principles of freedom." I couldn't agree with you more, because today, it's at stake in many parts of the world.

And together, we're supporting Ukraine. I can't thank you enough for your significant support for Ukraine—it matters a great deal—and for your leadership, the partnership, and the challenge.

Also, we signed a defense cooperation agreement, and I appreciate that as well. We're going to—and thank you for letting us station two destroyers in Spain. And together, we're—you're helping us face the challenge—we're both facing the challenges—of migration in the Western Hemisphere. You're doing a heck of a job.

And, Mr. President, you're about to take on the European Council's Presidency this summer, and I'm anxious to talk to you about that as well.

We've got a lot to talk about.

Prime Minister Sánchez. Absolutely. Well, thank you very much. Thank you, President Biden, for—I think it's a great pleasure, because I see you as a reference in the defense of democracy, as many citizens around the world would have never imagined that democracy would be under threat precisely here in Washington, in the U.S. But your commitment with the democratic values is an example to everyone.

And in this context, I do believe that Spain and the United States, we share common values, and our bilateral relations are excellent. We are allies, friends, and also are strategic partners.

And I would like to touch upon four topics that we will discuss today.

The first one is on Russians' aggressions in Ukraine. I do believe that the transatlantic bond and the unity among allies remains rock solid, President. We support Ukraine. Of course, we work for a lasting and just peace that respects fully the international law and also the principles of the U.N. Charter.

Make no mistake: In this war, there is an aggressor and a victim, and the aggressor is President Putin. So this will be the first topic.

The second topic is how our governments—the U.S. administration and also the Spanish Government—we put in the center of our political priorities, in the benefit to our middle and working classes, the green transition and the digital transformation.

I would propose, President Biden, that we can work together to have the best success of COP28 later this year and also that we could work together—together with the European Union—in order to regulate the artificial intelligence to reach a highest level of standards at the global level.

The third point would be, as President Biden said, the Presidency of the Council of the European Union. We are very ambitious, President. We have many goals. But I would like to highlight two, which I think would be very important in the second semester of the year.

The first one is how do we reindustrialize the European Union, together with the U.S. economy, and also how do we, as Europeans, strength our bilateral cooperation with Latin America, which is a part of the world, a region, where Spain and the U.S., we have common interests about democracy, prosperity, and safe, regular, and orderly migration pathways.

And last but not least, of course, we will talk about our bilateral relations—which I think are excellent—on the defense, as President Biden said, but also on science, trade, investments. We also are going to sign agreements to work together at the multilateral level in order to boost gender equality, LGTB rights, and also climate change, to name a few.

So, President Biden, I do believe that the world needs a U.S. President that is committed to fighting the good fight, like you do. And you can count on Spain in that endeavor.

So let's keep on doing this job.

President Biden. Well, partner, I do count on it. Thank you.

Prime Minister Sánchez. Thank you.

President Biden. Thank you.

Prime Minister Sánchez. Thank you very much.

NOTE: The President spoke at 2:11 p.m. in the Oval Office at the White House.

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